



## NATHA RULES 2008-2009

Amateur Class – NATHA Amateur Rules

OPEN Class – NUCS Rules

Professional Class – NATHA Professional Rules

### **Mixed Doubles**

Women or Juniors (young hunters under 18) can choose the partner of their choice and compete in Mixed Doubles Class

A competitor can compete in both Professional and the OPEN Class, if they choose!

If you choose to compete in the Amateur Class, you or your dog cannot compete in the Professional Class Doubles at that tournament.

Dogs will be allowed to compete in up to 4 classes per tournament, and as often as twice per event, per day. (Maximum 8)

A safety will be awarded on the dog, when a safe shot is not possible.

<b>NATHA Classes</b>	<b>Rules</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Dog Type</b>
<b>Professional Doubles</b>	<b>NATHA Professional</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Open Doubles</b>	<b>NUCS</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Amateur Doubles</b>	<b>NATHA Amateur</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Top Gun</b>	<b>NATHA Professional</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Open Singles</b>	<b>NUCS</b>	<b>two run combo</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Top Gun 50</b>	<b>NATHA Professional</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Top Gun 60</b>	<b>NATHA Professional</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Puppy</b>	<b>NATHA Professional</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Mixed Doubles</b>	<b>NATHA Amateur</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Juniors</b>	<b>NATHA Amateur</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>
<b>Senior Dog (over 8)</b>	<b>NATHA Amateur</b>	<b>one run</b>	<b>Pointer &amp; Flusher</b>

## Point system

60 pts	Shots Not Taken
200 pts	Birds Harvested
75 pts	Finds
45 pts	Retrieves
1 pt	every second remaining

## Restrictions to competition

A dog may only be entered twice in the same division per day, maximum four divisions per day and a maximum of 8 runs per day. A player must be changed to enter again in any division. There are no crossovers from Amateur Class to Professional Class allowed, in the same tournament.

## Competition specific rules

**TOP GUN: Limited to 8 shells, 20-minute event, 4 Birds. This is a one hunter and one dog format event; it includes Juniors, Women, Top Gun Over 50, Top Gun Over 60 and Professional Top Gun**

- If a pointing dog goes on point in a normal out of bounds, the hunter may go out of bounds with his gun and the judge, flush the bird and shoot it. The bird must be flushed in a safe direction before a shot may be taken. An unsafe flush out of bounds will receive only a find in the scoring.

- **NATHA**

In the Top gun class only, the same team may compete twice (hunter and dog), if the hunter chooses. All prizes, money and trophies offered in that competition shall be earned from either run, if appropriate. However, the runs must be on different days, unless the competition takes place on one day only. No NATHA Dog Points will be awarded for any placements or victories if the hunter elects to run the same team twice. All Dog Points will be moved down, to the appropriate team.

## OPEN CLASS

The OPEN Class will be run under NUCS rules; so points awarded will be recognized by both NATHA and NUCS for qualification toward the OPEN Class Top Dog award and NUCS Nationals.

[Official page for NUCS Rules, [click here](#)]

**PROFESSIONAL CLASS (Limited to 12 Shells) 25 Minute event - 6 Birds or as the promoter determines**

- Competition for two hunters, one dog. Dogs of all ages are permitted.
- Each Hunter is limited to 6 shells each, with a total of 12 shots combined for the entire team.
- Unlimited amount of entries are permitted. Contestants must change 1 element of the team (hunter or dog change) and pay another entry fee. Except no dog may run more than 2 times in any one class per day.

**PUPPY (Limited to 12 Shells) 25 Minute event - 6 Birds**

- Same requirements as Professional Class event apply except for the following: The dog must be under the age of 2 years as of January 1st of any new year. Proof of age is required by the participant or known by the tournament official (appropriate documentation should be available if requested by the official).

## **AMATEUR CLASS (Limited to 12 Shells), 20 Minute event – 4 Birds or as the promoter determines**

- Hunter or dog may not participate in a Professional Doubles event when competing in the Amateur Class at the event

### **Competition rules**

#### **1. Trespass Area / Internal Boundary Buffer Zone**

##### **a) Trespass Area (leaves Club property)**

Hunters or dogs may not trespass under any circumstances, except injury. If a pointing dog inadvertently goes on point in a trespass area, permission to retrieve the dog needs to be given by an official before leaving club property. Under no circumstances will a bird be allowed to be harvested in a trespass area. Hunters who leave club property with permission of an official may not carry a firearm when retrieving the dog.

##### **b) Internal Boundary Buffer Zone**

Marked out of bounds by the tournament official, this creates a safe buffer zone inside the club property. Reasons for this include protection of club neighbor property, buildings, or other competition areas. These zones are not intended to be hunted and therefore no hunter will be allowed to shoot inside a buffer zone (exception: Top Gun Pointer event - see Top Gun Specific Rules)

Specific rules regarding the buffer zone include:

- A dog may only enter the buffer zone in hot pursuit of a bird.
- A find or retrieve may be awarded only if the bird is shot by the hunter inside the hunting field. (Exception Top Gun Pointer)
- Retrieves must be to the inside of the hunting field in order for retrieve points to be awarded.
- Trapped birds in a buffer zone are treated as a normal trapped bird. The retrieve must be to the inside of the hunting field.
- Hunters may enter the buffer zone only with the intent to flush a pointed or worked bird (this must be confirmed and approved by the judge before the hunter enters the buffer zone). The flushing hunter's firearm may not be carried into the buffer zone when attempting to flush the bird (exception: Top Gun Pointer event - see Top Gun Specific Rules).
- No safeties will be awarded to competitors for birds that flush into another competition hunting field and no shots may be taken. Only the find points will be awarded for the dog work.
- A hunter may enter the buffer zone to retrieve a dead bird, but only with the judge's permission. The judge will grant permission provided the retrieve does not interfere with an adjoining field's competition.

Important Note: In the case of the last bird, the clock does not stop until the bird touches the hunter's hand. The hunter must be in bounds to stop the clock.

#### **2. Dogs leaving fields**

- When a dog leaves its designated hunting field and moves into another active competition field, it is the responsibility of the handler with his voice, whistle, or electric training collar to regain control of the dog. If the dog flushes a bird in another competitor's field, full points shall be awarded to the competitor in that field for the bird. No points will be awarded to the hunting team that lost control and the clock will continue running.
- If the hunter cannot gain control of the dog, he can leave his gun and physically go into the field only with permission of the judge in the invaded field, and lead or carry the dog out of the field

### **3. Stocking**

- Stocking shall include six (6) birds for professional, Open doubles and puppy, and four (4) birds for Open Singles, Amateur and Top Gun runs, excluding the first run wherein eight (8) birds will be released for a professional run and puppy run. A total of five (5) birds will be released for Top Gun and Open first runs.
- Birds shall be placed at random by stockers (See Instructions for Stockers).
- When placing a bird in the field, if the bird flies away upon setting, it should be replaced. If the flyaway takes place after all stockers have returned and while the competitors have been removed from the containment area, but not yet begun their run, the bird should be replaced.
- If a bird flies into the field while stockers are stocking, it is considered good luck.
- If in the course of setting the fields, the stockers flush a bird that flies away, the bird shall be replaced. If a team coming out flushes a bird purposely or accidentally, the judge may rule:  
Purposeful - The team will be fined 200 points, and the bird shall be replaced. The bird replaced should be placed somewhere other than where the bird was flushed.  
Accidental - It shall be considered bad luck.
- Following all competitions, all dogs should be brought to lead, and the team should promptly leave the field.

### **4. Spectators on the Set**

- The managing tournament official shall determine whether or not spectators can observe the set, but under no circumstances can competitors view their own set. Containment areas should be developed for the hunters while their set is taking place. (U.S. Open Rule: No one may watch the set)
- There will be no communication of any type between the spectators and competitors regarding sets.
- Tournament officials may determine whether or not hunters can watch the run proceeding. (U.S. Open Rule: Hunters will not watch the run proceeding)
- It is the responsibility of the managing tournament official to consistently monitor rules for their events.

### **5. Ammunition**

- Hunters may use all gauges of shotguns 12 gauge or smaller while competing, but no shells larger than 2 3/4".
- If a bird is shot by an illegal shell, it shall not count in the point total for the team. The judge will warn the hunter of the violation. Should the hunter continue using the illegal shell(s) after the warning, the hunter will be disqualified by the judge.
- If a hunter runs out of shells, he may not exchange with the other hunter. If both hunters run out of shells, the run is considered completed. Time will be stopped and the hunters will exit the field. No points will be awarded for time remaining on the clock when the run is scored.

### **6. Non Bird**

- Bird points will be awarded for the species of a particular tournament. When another bird is accidentally shot, the shell will count and be deducted, but no finds or retrieves will be awarded. If a fur-bearing animal (i.e.: skunk or raccoon) is engaged by the dog, with the permission of the judge and if legal with the state, a hunter may dispatch the fur-bearer from the field and the clock will continue to run. No shell will be charged. There will be no reruns or interference. In the event a dead bird is found it may be awarded points (see Dead bird).

## **7. Trapping**

- A bird may be trapped by a dog. For Pointing dogs, the team trapping the bird will be allowed one trap per run without penalty, all additional traps will be assessed a 30-point penalty (pointer class only.) A hunter, of the captain's choice, will be deducted one (1) shell.
- A bird may not be trapped by a hunter unless the hunter is assisting the bird into the air with the intent of shooting. Hunters should not stump birds or kick them with the intent to harm. This will result in loss of bird points. The hunter may assist a bird to fly (throwing it up in the air) so a shot may be taken.
- Trapped bird by the dog will constitute a penalty of 30 points in the pointer class only. Hunter may reach in to throw the bird to prevent the dog from trapping or have the option of releasing the bird from the dog to take a shot.

## **8. Gun Malfunctions**

- A gun malfunction by either teammate shall be considered bad luck. It is the option of the individual to leave the field and return with another gun of legal gauge, and the clock will continue to run. The hunter has to leave the field himself, and cannot appoint someone else to leave or enter the field in his place.

## **9. Dog in Heat**

- The promoter may accept dog in heat entries provided they are placed at the end of the day so as not to affect other teams' competition.

## **10. Dog Injured**

- If a dog is injured and unable to continue its competition prior to harvesting fifty percent (50%) of the birds in the field, the judge shall take an independent dog in the field and harvest down to equivalent of 2 the birds in the field prior to the stocking.

## **11. Dead Bird Found in Field**

- When a dog traps a bird, there must be an adequate demonstration of life for the judge to rule a trap. If in the judge's estimation there is no life, it will be counted as a dead bird. Dead birds are awarded 45 points provided it is the type of bird being hunted in the existing tournament. Dead birds are defined as consisting of the entire, intact carcass. Wings or body parts do not constitute a dead bird.

## **12. Birds Entering the Field**

- When a bird enters the field, it may be found, harvested, and retrieved as if that bird were set for that competitive run. In the event a staff error creates an unfair advantage, an official ruling may require removal of birds from the field (ex. a bird crate overturns during or after stacking and additional birds escape into the field thus creating an unfair advantage).

### **13. Disqualification**

- A hunter may receive a run disqualification for any of the following reasons:
  1. Shooting more than the allowed limit. Violating the no-trespass rule.
  2. Ignoring the judges ruling and warnings concerning buffer zone usage.
  3. Continually disregarding judge warnings concerning competition rules.
  4. Being under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- A hunter may receive an event disqualification (extremely serious) for continually abusing event officials after being appropriately warned (see Sportsmanship for complete details of the results of an event disqualification).
- When a hunter is disqualified, the judge should encourage the team to continue and remove birds from the field. Should the team not continue to hunt, the judge and/or stockers should make their best effort to flush down to fifty percent (50%) of the originally set birds.
- Hunters who receive a run disqualification are not entitled to reimbursement of their entry fees, and reruns are not permitted. In addition, scores will not be posted and prizes will not be awarded.

### **14. Bird Parts**

- Whenever bird parts are found in the field, it is the judges' or stockers' responsibility to remove them. Hunters should never drop or leave bird parts in the field. If they do, they will receive a warning. Competitors who continue to drop or leave bird parts in the field after they have been warned will be fined 100 points per offense.

### **15. Find - Awarded 75 points**

- A point or flush where, in the judges' opinion, the dog, through its action or behavior, was working the bird, or the judge believes the bird was produced due to actions of the dog. Pointers must establish and hold a point for two (2) seconds in order to achieve a find. There will be one "bump" exception per run to this rule, which applies to whatever bird or birds were found. There will be no second find on the same bird unless the judge has reason to believe that it may be a different bird. Only proven birds may be awarded find points. There is a maximum of two extra finds per run.
- Out of bounds finds are only awarded if the bird is shot by an inbounds hunter or trapped, except in Top Gun Pointer [see rule "Top Gun"].

### **16. Bird Count**

- The clock will be stopped when the proper number of birds is harvested for the event. Judges should count birds while still in the field to determine that the competition is complete. If the proper number of birds is not proven to be harvested, time will immediately resume and continue until either the final bird/s are harvested or the clock runs out of time.
- Competition is complete when the final bird touches the hunter's hand and the judge witnesses it. The hunter must be inbounds.
- When a competitor and judge agree that there is serious confusion regarding bird count or rules interpretation, a brief time-out may be taken. During a time-out period, the dog must be on lead (the clock will not stop until it is). Both competitors must be together with the judge. The only items discussed must be controversial issues, and time resumes immediately following the discussion.

## **17. Safety**

- A safety less a find will be awarded if a judge or authorized photographer accidentally flushes a bird.
- A competitor may request a safety when he feels that there is the probability of harm to the building, vehicle, dog, gallery, or judge. The judge must immediately respond. When a safety is granted, full points for find and retrieve shall be awarded, and a shell shall be deducted. There are no competitor safeties.
- No safeties will be awarded in a buffer/zone (see Trespass Area / Internal Boundary Buffer Zone).
- If either hunter fires a shot after the safety is called, none of the additional shots are deducted from either hunter. The judge's ruling is the overriding call and therefore precedence is held.
- If a safety is called on a last bird of the run the clock will be stopped at the time the safety is declared.
- A safety will be awarded on the dog, when a safe shot is not possible.

## **18. Retrieve - Awarded 45 points**

- Retrieve points will be granted when a dog picks up the bird and proceeds toward the hunter. This also applies to trapped birds. Specific rules concerning a fully-qualified retrieve include:
  1. There is no designated handler. All retrieves must be proved for points. The hunter should not move from his/her shooting position and the dog must deliver to hand within the pivot point of the hunter. [See Section 4]
  2. A trapped bird qualifies for a full retrieve when the dog returns a fully qualified retrieve.
  3. Retrieve must be to the hand of any hunter.
  4. Once shots are taken and the bird is hit, one hunter must remain at their location when the shot was taken. The judge will mark the position and warn the hunter to return to it if they have moved. Either hunter may guide a dog to an unmarked bird but one must remain in the original position, or in singles competition return to the original position.
  5. The dog must retrieve the bird and return to the handling hunter.
  6. The hunter may pivot on one foot only in a full 360-degree circle. Should the hunter wish to entice the dog to complete the retrieve, he/she may proceed backwards or at a right angle (90 degrees) to the dog's current position. It is not acceptable to use the enticement to improve ones position in the field for their next bird. Once movement has been made by the handling hunter, no forward movement may occur (the pivot point is now the current position of the hunter). The judge will warn the hunter of loss of full retrieve if compliance to this is not made.
  7. The dog must place the bird firmly in the hand of the handling hunter. A bird dropped within the pivotal circle of the hunter will not be considered a full retrieve. A bird firmly in the hand is one that is off the ground and securely placed in the hand of the hunter.
  8. During the course of the retrieve, the other hunter is not allowed to physically aid the dog, other than to help by calling to the dog to locate the bird.
  9. The handling hunter may use an electric training collar during the retrieve. Leads or other physical means will not be allowed.

The judge will warn the hunter(s) if the dog is not fulfilling the requirements of a retrieve.

## **19. Injured Hunter**

- When a hunter is injured in the field, it is the option of the team for one individual to choose to continue, unless the judge determines that time must stop and all focus must be on the injured participant. In this event, the run will be considered suspended and the tournament handled as if there were a disqualification (suspended on scoreboard).

## **20. Training Aids**

- Bells, Beeper collars, and Electric training collars are permissible. The managing tournament official can determine whether or not live training collars may be used in an event (U.S. Open Rule: training collars may be used).

## **21. Sportsmanship**

- All competitors are required to adhere to the rules of good sportsmanship. Intimidation motives or abusive behavior towards any tournament staff members (spectator security, stockers, judges, etc.) will not be tolerated. Competitors who do not comply with this requirement will receive a warning which will be summarily communicated to the managing tournament official. Only two warnings will be permitted per competitor. Competitors who receive more than two warnings will suffer disqualification of all performed runs. The competitor will then no longer be permitted to compete for the duration of the tournament.

## **22. Firearms Safety**

- All competitors are required to practice safe firearms handling before, during, and after their competitive runs. Firearms should be unloaded with actions open previous to entering a field and returned to a similar state when the run is completed. Should a competitor be operating in an unsafe manner with their firearm while in the field, the judge will issue a warning to correct the behavior. Should the behavior not be corrected, the run will be assessed a 100 point penalty. Further unsafe behavior will result in a warning with an automatic penalty assessment

## **MEMBERSHIP AND FEES**

The sanctioning fee is \$5.00 per run on any run in any class, for all runs where both members of a doubles team or the person running singles is a current member of NATHA. The sanctioning fee for non-members is \$10 per run. All memberships expire April 1, 2008; memberships can be purchased from NATHA directly or from a NATHA sanctioned tournament operator for only \$30.00. NUCS sanctioning fees are \$15.00.

The tournament operator will be given flexibility as to the length of run of the competition and may choose to have a maximum length of 25 minutes or 20 minutes, provided the maximum is the same for all competitors in a class.

## **Top Dog Showdown**

The U.S. OPEN Top Dog Showdown, following the U.S. OPEN, will include six (6) Pointers and six (6) Flushers in double competition, winner take all, for “Dog of the Year”. The entries will be the top two (2) placements in the U.S. OPEN and the next four (4) top point gainers from the entire NATHA season of competition. Top Dog points will be from all Professional Classes, Top Gun, Top Gun 50 and Top Gun 60 only, including the U.S. OPEN. The order of play will be by drawing. Any competitor unwilling to comply with the special rules of the “Top Dog Showdown” will be discreetly replaced by the next most eligible team. The winners of the Showdown will receive “The Cup”, with one cup for Pointers, one cup for Flushers, and equal prize money to both classes.

### **Points of Note:**

Showdown rules will be NATHA doubles rules

No one dog can compete more than once

No hunter can compete in more than one class

NATHA reserves the right for the competition to be delayed up to 24 hours due to weather or unsuitable conditions

Competitors may be required to wear certain clothing or signage from the event sponsors

Competitors may be required to wear cameras or recording devices in the course of the competition

Competitors agree to release the full usage of their names, images, or likeness for the purpose of broadcast or print of any other media to be determined by NATHA or its designee.